PROJECT DESCRIPTION
WHITE'S RESERVOIR MAINTENANCE – T 11S, R 02E, SEC 9 (#6690)

WHO

Dickshooter Cattle Co. (permittee) retains a grazing permit in the Northwest Allotment of the Bruneau Field Office, BLM. The permittee proposes to clean accumulated sediment from the storage area immediately behind the White's Reservoir berm to improve the reservoir's water-holding capacity while the reservoir is completely dry and is amenable to completion of the work. The project dates from 1941, and was originally an irrigation reservoir for the White's Place ranch property. The last maintenance of record was completed in 1990 or 1991. The permittee has been assigned maintenance of this reservoir in 1995 as a condition of the permit transfer and will cooperate with BLM in performance of required maintenance activities.

Additional maintenance was planned for 2001 or 2002 to address safety considerations should larger dams on Boise District such as this one fail. While EA ID-100-2001-EA-069 from 2001 addresses inspection and maintenance of large reservoirs including this one for safety of downstream life and property; the project predates FLPMA, and no clearances or other environmental documentation are available for the Reservoir itself. The maintenance in 1990 was authorized under a CX, with activity restricted to the existing area of disturbance to address potential impacts to other resources.

WHAT

Maintenance activities would include removing sediment from the reservoir backwater using a bulldozer to displace the sediment. The sediment would be pushed out of the ponding area at the base of the dam and spread out and pushed on to the berm. All earth work would occur in areas previously disturbed by impoundment construction. Care would be taken to avoid breaking the seal in the excavation area, in particular, to avoid the need to use bentonite to reestablish the seal. Bentonite is absorbent clay consisting mostly of Montmorillonite. The extent of the disturbed area would not exceed 5 acres.

WHEN

Prior to September 15, 2014. The timing will be constrained by a combination of factors, but especially by continuing dryness of the proposed treatment area, equipment and operator availability, and completion of BLM clearances and/or availability of BLM staff. Wet conditions would create unacceptable risk of delay in completion or even of equipment loss.

WHERE

Maintenance work would be done at the existing reservoir located in the Southwest quarters of the Northeast quarter of Section 9, Township 11 South, Range 2 East. The project map depicts the location of the reservoir and access routes. The equipment operator could access the reservoir from either the eastern or western routes, and walk the dozer in from an unloading point near the main road.

Figure 3. Reservoir Maintenance Location and Access Overview

Figure 2. White's Reservoir on November 3, 2011. High snowpack, precipitation year.

Figure 3. White's Reservoir on July 2, 2013. Focus of cleanout in pit immediately behind dam. May have had water early in 2013, none available during period of use.

Figure 4. White's Reservoir on June 26, 2014. Ponding area completely dry.

Figure 4. White's Reservoir on June 16, 2006. Ponding area inundated in years of average or greater snowpack, with emergent vegetation.

HOW

Work would be performed with a bulldozer (Figure 5). Equipment would access the reservoir along an existing but unmapped route from the Wickahoney Road to the southeast (Figure 1). The bulldozer would be transported on a low boy trailer to a staging area along the Wickahoney Road. The operator would then drive the bulldozer along the remainder of the route to the reservoir. The probable area of surface disturbance at the reservoir maintenance site at the base of the dam would total approximately 3 acres. The dimensions of the finished project would retain up to -- acre feet per year of surface water, per the terms of the associated water right (water right has to be retrieved from Idaho DWR because RIPS and project files have been deleted for the reservoir itself).

The following maintenance stipulations would be in effect:

1. All earth work will occur within the original area of disturbance.
2. Excavation will avoid a depth that will break seal in pit behind dam. Bentonite may be necessary to restore seal if broken.
3. Additions to embankment for dam will be taken from reservoir pit.
4. Disturbed areas will be graded to resemble existing landscape contours to minimize visual contrast.
5. Maintenance work will be restricted to periods when the soil is dry and firm enough to support vehicles without creating ruts.
6. No new roads or blading will be allowed in moving equipment to the reservoir site.

Figure 5. Example of Bulldozer (D8)